



FOCUS

Integration • Inclusion

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For a fair and welcoming French-language community in Ontario

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About...

Truly responsive programs

By: Darlyn Mentor,
Director, Settlement Programs

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To respond to the articles published
here and offer suggestions or comments,
please contact us by email at
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La Passerelle I.D.É. is a non-profit
organization created in response to the
integration and economic development
needs of young Francophones from the
various cultural communities of Greater
Toronto. Founded in 1993, La Passerelle
is recognized within the French-speaking
community for its leadership on issues and
matters affecting its clientele.
www.passerelleide.com

To consult calls for proposals issued by
Citizenship and Immigration Canada,
Settlement Directorate, Ontario Region,
visit www.etalblissement.org.

Throughout 2010-11, efforts at Citizenship and Immigration Canada continued to focus on the implementation of new programming for 2011-13 within the context of our modernized approach. The thinking behind the new programming is based on several priority needs identified within immigrant minority Francophone communities. A significant number of Francophone organizations will continue to provide the best possible services to newcomers in cities across Ontario including Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor and Sudbury. At the local level, 20 or more programs will be implemented by Francophone organizations and more than 10 pilot projects will be funded by CIC's Regional Office.

Aside from the new programming, which promises greater flexibility and increased access to services for newcomers, the last months have seen some important developments. I refer specifically to innovative projects which have produced very encouraging results, most notably Destination Canada and the cognitive behavioural therapy project spearheaded by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Destination Canada

In November 2010, the Ontario Region together with a group of employers took part in Destination Canada, an annual recruitment event held in Paris, Brussels and Tunis. Participating employers included Montfort Hospital, two school boards from Central Southwestern Ontario as well City Welding and Alexandria Restaurant, both from Sudbury.

Two factors contributed to the success of the 2010 edition, the first being the media relations strategy, which raised awareness of Canada as a whole among Francophone target audiences in Europe and elsewhere. The tours to different regions of Canada were another contributing factor. They enabled our government partners from France, Brussels and Tunis to link up with Canadian provinces, Francophone communities and Canadian employers.

The results indicate that the efforts invested in this event were well worth it. For instance, City Welding successfully recruited four candidates abroad who will be taking up residence in Sudbury in 2011. Another employer, the restaurant owner, has hired two new chefs, a move that will further expand business. Locally, an integration strategy is in place to ensure these newcomers have access to a continuum of services, in other words everything they need to get them started in their new life. The strategy was developed with the help of Northern Ontario's Francophone Immigration Support Network and Sudbury's one-stop service for newcomers.

Cognitive behavioral therapy

The purpose of the study carried out by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health was to develop culturally adapted cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) interventions for the Spanish-, English- and French-speaking immigrant populations of African and Caribbean origin. CBT is a psychotherapy that has proven effective in treating many mental illnesses including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis.

The ultimate aim of the project can be seen in the three manuals that were developed for each of the target audiences. A DVD entitled *Toward a new model of services for Canadians of African Descent* was also produced. The project team developed and delivered a series of six educational workshops to help local Francophone service providers, community and religious leaders to better understand mental illness. These resources will serve communities well beyond the life of the initiative.

Both initiatives, the recruitment drive abroad and the development of culturally adapted cognitive behavioural therapy, are to be counted among those programs which are truly responsive to the needs of Francophone newcomers. CIC will continue to develop regionally focused programming to help immigrants integrate successfully in Francophone minority communities from an economic, social and cultural standpoint.

Promotion, Recruitment and Settlement

Province-Wide Coordination for the French-Language Swis Program

For the first time since the French-language component of the SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools) Program was implemented, a province-wide Francophone coordination is now in place.

COPA was hired in December of 2009 by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to become the first Provincial Coordinator of Ontario's Francophone network of SWIS teams in French-language schools. As such, it provides leadership and support to the five existing Francophone teams in Hamilton, Windsor, London-Sarnia, Ottawa and the Greater Toronto Area. COPA is a French-language non-profit organization that specializes in resource development, training and programming.

Parity

In its role as Provincial Coordinator, COPA is committed to achieving parity with the English-language program, working in close collaboration with its Anglophone counterpart as well as the Francophone SWIS teams, and CIC. Parity is being sought in key areas of activities including training, educational and promotional resources, as well as program development and administration.

Provincial Steering Committee

Together, COPA and CIC have set up the Francophone Provincial Steering Committee, which is comprised of partners from within the French-language network. SWIS teams are represented as are school boards, the Ministry of Education, CIC and COPA itself. The Committee's role is to provide leadership in collaboration with CIC and the Provincial Coordinator.

Engagement And Networking

In collaboration with its Anglophone counterpart, COPA plans and manages provincial meetings that bring together SWIS stakeholders from both official language groups. Work sessions are led jointly to



ensure full participation and the integration of Francophone teams; provincial get-togethers are also an opportunity to strengthen their ties.

New Training Sessions

COPA has developed and provided two training sessions. A professional development session is under development for 2011.

Provincial Consultation

COPA also led another major undertaking, a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders across the province. The extensive report includes a summary of key findings in addition to recommendations designed to promote further dialogue and to ensure sound planning as part of CIC's modernized approach.

Adaptation Of The Now Program

The Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) Program has been adapted from English and tailored to the Franco-Ontarian context with

the help of Toni Chalah, the French-language SWIS Coordinator at the Centre francophone de Toronto. COPA has provided significant support to local Francophone SWIS teams to ensure the successful implementation of this program (in both 2009 and 2010). In addition, the Provincial Coordinator held training sessions in four locations in August 2010 to train teams of student ambassadors. An activity report is posted at www.tteeontario.ca.

Otis Version 2.0 – French-Language Training

In the fall of 2010, COPA worked closely with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) to ensure the delivery of training sessions, in French, pertaining to OTIS 2.0, the new data entry and stats reporting system.

Web Site

In November 2010, COPA launched a web site to promote Ontario's French-language SWIS

program: www.teeontario.ca. The new web resource is intended for newcomers, service providers, and individuals abroad who may be considering immigrating to Canada in the near future.

The web site provides information about the Program and links to French-language SWIS teams across the province. A section is reserved for local teams to post their activities and share news of their achievements. Under the Our Teams, Our Schools heading, visitors can find the names of organizations providing a SWIS program in their area and a list of participating schools. All newly-created COPA resources are available for download on the site.

The web site also provides information on a host of issues including provincial coordination, the new Provincial Steering

Committee, Ontario's francophonie and French-language school system. The site is also linked to other relevant web sites including établissement.org.

Promotional Resources

COPA has developed a wide range of promotional resources to promote the French-language SWIS Program including pamphlets, posters, postcards, kits and banners. Also, the second issue of its newsletter was distributed in November 2010. COPA is currently working with the Ministry of Education to update the Newcomers' Guide to the Ontario school system, one of several projects involving the development of information tools.

Documentary

A new documentary film titled *Entre deux mondes* (Between Two Worlds) produced by COPA captures unscripted testimonials by

young newcomers as they integrate French-language schools and peers who act as ambassadors. These students are trained to welcome newcomers and help them integrate school life. Francophone SWIS are also featured explaining their role and the positive changes they bring about in schools. The film can be viewed online at www.teeontario.ca and will soon be released in DVD format.

Information

For more information about the Provincial Coordinator, please contact Lisa Weintraub at COPA at 416 466 7490, or by email at copa@rogers.com.

What's new? www.afroculture.ca

With funding support from Canadian Heritage, ADJ, a French-language organization dedicated to youth, has built and launched a new web site. www.afroculture.ca has but one purpose: to serve as an artistic and cultural showcase of Canada's Francophone ethnocultural communities.

www.afroculture.ca shines a spotlight on Afro-Canadian artistic and cultural programming. Every month, a different

community takes centre stage. In the spring of 2010 for instance, the web site paid tribute to the cultural riches of Cameroon and the Ivory Coast; later that summer, the many talents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were on full display. And in months to come, many other communities will be given an opportunity to showcase their particular brand of arts and culture. Such visibility in cyberspace provides Canadian Francophone ethnocultural communities with limitless potential to shine beyond all borders.

The web site allows any ethnocultural individual engaged in a performance art, or active on the cultural scene through poetry, dance, music, storytelling, choreography, creative writing, drawing, painting, acting, theatre productions, comedy or other forms of art, to post a profile online. Artistic groups and cultural organizations can also post their programming online at no cost. And every month,

registered members receive a calendar of scheduled community performances and presentations.

www.afroculture.ca is equipped with the latest interactive technologies. It provides a virtual platform where ethnocultural communities and Canadian-born audiences meet as part of a shared cultural experience. Ultimately, the web site is a driving force, not only promoting the culture and traditions of Francophone ethnocultural communities, but also compelling both artists and audiences to come together, to explore one another, and to learn about each other through the arts.

Web site construction and implementation were made possible thanks to funding from Canadian Culture Online, under the Canada Interactive Fund administered by Canadian Heritage.

Editorial team



Who Hires Francophone Immigrants?

A French-language guide published by BilingualLink

This guide, the result of a comprehensive and meticulous research effort, identifies organizations that provide French-language services and those seeking to hire Francophone talent. A listing of occupations in demand in each region is also included. The guide serves a number of purposes:

- ▶ It allows immigrants and integration service providers to explore the employment opportunities that exist beyond the most sought-after employers usually targeted in the private sector, and where job hunting can be quite challenging.
- ▶ It promotes the employment potential of community sector organizations and encourages immigrants to consider employment in this highly dynamic sector of the economy.
- ▶ It highlights employers that actively promote employment equity, hire immigrants and seek to fast-track access to employment opportunities.
- ▶ It encourages skills transfer with newcomers.
- ▶ It explores various options in terms of career planning.
- ▶ It provides relevant information in support of integration services.
- ▶ It steers frontline workers and practitioners as they navigate the bilingual labour market with immigrant clients in search of employment.
- ▶ It encourages community organizations to position themselves as immigrant-friendly workplaces.



The guide was made possible thanks to funding support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. To view it, go to: <http://www.bilinguallink.com/WebFTP/web193/QuiEmbauche-Web.pdf>

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Editorial team



Francophone Communities

Collège Boréal in Toronto: *Built on Cultural Diversity*



Collège Boréal has garnered recognition for many innovative achievements, among them quality study programs, the highest graduation rate in eight consecutive years, not to mention the highest graduate satisfaction rate in Ontario for the 7th time in 11 years. The College is anchored in communities across Ontario, offering 38 service locations in 29 different municipalities. Its employment services generate close to 100,000 client visits every year and, since the day it first opened its doors, Collège Boréal has trained and educated some 21,000 full-time equivalent students.

Its Toronto campus has many remarkable traits, one of which is diversity, great diversity. Did you know that the overwhelming majority of its Francophone student population is of African origin?

Toronto's highly diverse Francophone population has access to a wide range of learning opportunities thanks to the College's two central locations. Its postsecondary installations are as responsive to the needs of the labour market as they are to the requirements of living in Ontario's cosmopolitan capital city.

New Learning Support Centre and language laboratory

Beginning in September 2010, students at Collège Boréal can call on its new Learning Support Centre and language laboratory for assistance. The latter will focus on providing support with English as a second language, which newcomers need in order to successfully integrate into Ontario's Central Southwestern labour market.

New Learning Opportunities at Hair Styling School

In addition to acquiring the skills and techniques leading to certification in hair design and styling, students at Toronto's only French-language Hairstyling School are learning to work with African hair style and design as well as to manage a hair styling salon. By broadening their skills set, these

future hairstylists and beauty experts increase the range of career opportunities available to them in a highly competitive environment.

Language Training Program for Health Professionals

This language training program specifically geared to foreign-trained professionals will again be offered in the fall. The program helps them overcome the challenges of labour market integration and achieve Canadian equivalency in English as a work language. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, this highly intensive program helps newcomers gain a better understanding of how Canadian society works and the keys to success.

The Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) Project

This project is designed to help internationally trained immigrants navigate the pathways from pre-entry services through employment transition and into the workforce. Two advisors, one based in Mississauga and the other in Toronto, help steer immigrants to the training programs and employment services they need in order to achieve integration.

Community Economic Development (CED) Program

This unique post-diploma program offers a certification to immigrants looking for a Canadian diploma. In addition to opening the door to numerous career opportunities, including the option of becoming self-employed, the CED Program can lead to a grant or bursary from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). As part of their training, students must devise an original and innovative community development project, the kind of challenge that will help them become highly effective agents of change at the community level.

For more information, call 1-866-262-8566 or visit www.collegeboreal.ca.

Challenges of Integration for Immigrant Families: *Eye-opening Findings*

In 2010, the Social Planning Council of Ottawa released the results of a qualitative analysis that sketches the challenges of integration faced by immigrant families living in the Nation's Capital, and the support they require in order to successfully integrate into Canadian society. Part of the report deals specifically with the reality of Francophone immigrant families. The following is an excerpt followed by the report's conclusion. This research was made possible thanks to funding support from United Way and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada as part of the Social Development Partnerships Program.

Uniqueness of Francophone Immigrant Families

Francophone immigrant and refugee families have distinct needs. They are part of a linguistic minority in Canada. They are a minority within the Francophone community. The number of Francophone immigrants and refugees varies according to the definition used in the studies. Statistics Canada defines "a Francophone person" as someone whose first language learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the census is French. This definition excludes a large number of people, particularly Francophiles, immigrants and individuals from ethnocultural communities. These individuals can use French in their work, studies or everyday life. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa uses a more inclusive definition of the Francophone community including all these factors. In 2006 Francophone immigrants in Ottawa accounted for 12.3% of the Francophone population. They had the largest number of households with six or more members and the higher proportion of low-income households than the population as a whole (SPCO 2004).

In 2006 (CIC), a significant percentage of recently arrived Francophones were refugees. Ottawa was one of the main cities where they settled.

Francophone immigrants have valuable assets related to their command of French and educational achievements. They have proportionally completed more post-secondary studies than both, the Francophone population and Ottawa population as a whole (SPCO 2004). Despite their assets, Francophone immigrants face various economic and social barriers in their integration process. Unilingual Francophone families living outside Quebec (both immigrants and non-immigrants), have difficulties accessing employment, schools and

services in French. Violette (2008) notes the "language shock" of immigrant families facing this harsh reality. This clash may force them to assess the cost of keeping their Francophone identity and consequently impacts their rate of language retention. Francophone immigrants are losing the language faster than native Francophones, as a result of economic survival and structural barriers (Quell, 2008). Participants at SPCO focus groups stressed the need for language training in the second official language for both Francophone and Anglophone immigrants, in order to increase their employment opportunities and thus economic security.

Francophone immigrants do not have the same educational rights granted to official language minorities. As a result, they cannot take for granted enrolling their children in the French school system. There is no formal education policy to integrate them. Access is determined by the Admissions Committee. The Committee's decisions have been criticized as inconsistent. Some children are not accepted because they do not speak

enough French at home or their mother tongue is not French (Farmer 2008; Magassa, 2008). Quell (2008) suggests that the administration of the Francophone school system by native-Francophones is part of the problem. "It is as if these Francophone minorities were a separate entity that does not naturally include immigrants and as if these minorities had to decide whether or not they would accept to share "their" schools with Francophone immigrants." Besides, Francophone families may lack the necessary information to register their children in French schools. "The mothers were busy going through the refugee process and then applying for permanent residency for the first years. For example, one of the things that happened was that some mothers put their children in English schools, because they did not know they could take their children to French schools. They could not speak English, they spoke French. Then it became difficult to help the children with school work" (SPCO focus groups).

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It is as if these Francophone minorities were a separate entity that does not naturally include immigrants and as if these minorities had to decide whether or not they would accept to share “their” schools with Francophone immigrants.”

The Farmer (2008) study highlights the untapped partnerships with community organizations that could facilitate the relations between Francophone schools and immigrant families. The author notes that the central issue is to provide equal opportunities for academic achievement to Francophone immigrant children. This requires schools to provide supports for their integration. It is worthy to note, that French schools have implemented a settlement program in collaboration with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The program is expected to outreach to Francophone immigrant families and support young refugees. However, progress would need to be assessed.

Francophone immigrant/refugees families have difficulties to integrate into Francophone communities. Magassa (2008) notes the disappointment of immigrant families from the lack of acceptance by the Francophone communities. Members of visible minority groups, such as Blacks, are more vulnerable because of their ethnicity and higher incidence of poverty (racialization of poverty). Their lack of integration affects not only themselves, but the development of Francophone communities. Francophone minority communities in the country can no longer ensure their growth without immigration, as a result of the aging population trend and low fertility rate.

The issue at stake for Francophone mainstream organizations is not only that Francophone immigrants are part of a language minority in Canada, but also part of the Canadian cultural diversity. Participants at SPCO focus groups stated that language ties all parts of the Francophone community together. However, Francophone immigrants need Francophone organizations to address problem areas and needs from a cultural point of view instead of a mainly linguistic one. Community members want not only to be served in French, but they

also want community practitioners to know that they have to deal with obstacles quite different from those encountered by Franco-Ontarians. It is this lack of understanding that led to the creation of services by Francophone immigrant and visible minority groups. Currently the Social Planning Council is supporting the development of the Ottawa Ethnocultural Coalition for both Anglophone and Francophone small community organizations. Key areas of support include capacity building, access to a shared facility and community economic development.

Conclusion

There is a tendency to view the integration process as a short-term process, focused on immediate needs, such as housing, ESL/FSL, employment and income support. However, this report has shown that many of the issues addressed require a long-term approach. Such an approach is necessary to achieve integration at all levels, cultural, economic, social and political. The immigration process has far-reaching consequences that include second and third generations that cannot be ignored. As well, Canadian demographics indicate that economic growth and increase of the workforce in the near future will significantly rely on immigration. Therefore, the future of immigrant/refugee children and youth concerns all citizens.

A successful integration of immigrants and refugee families requires not only a focus on recruitment, but also on barriers preventing their integration at all levels.

A successful integration of immigrants and refugee families requires not only a focus on recruitment, but also on barriers preventing their integration at all levels. Family support and social networks have proved to be crucial to facilitate the integration process. Thus, the contributions of the extended families should be valued and recognized. Integration services should be provided within the context of the family and not just to individuals as separate entities. This holistic approach will strengthen

the family unit. There is an agreement that the main barrier to successful integration of immigrants is adequate and sustainable employment. The lack of it increases the likelihood of a family living in poverty. The school system has an important role to play in facilitating the integration of immigrant/refugee children and youth. As well, it can make a significant contribution in assisting their transition from school to work.

Family units are disrupted by the lack of awareness of the challenges of migration and lack of supporting services.

At the centre of intergenerational tensions and family conflicts is the lack of a preventive approach. Family units are disrupted by the lack of awareness of the challenges of migration and lack of supporting services. Culturally-sensitive services are central to facilitate the integration and prevent exclusion of immigrants and refugees; in particular, seniors. Community organizations have an important role to play in the integration process. However, they lack sustained and adequate funding. Funding cutbacks have weakened service delivery, while the number of immigrants and refugee families has increased steadily. There is a need for a concerted effort between all stakeholders at the public, private and community levels, in order to develop an integrated and long-term approach to integration focused on families.

Excerpt of research report entitled Immigrant Children, Youth and Families: A Qualitative Analysis of the Challenges of Integration, Social Planning Council of Ottawa, March 2010

The complete research report is available at www.spcottawa.on.ca/, in the Research and Voluntary Sector Supports section of the web site, under the Research and Data heading.

Mental Health: Strengthening of Afro-Caribbean Francophone Capacity

Antoine Derose,

Program Consultant, Policy,
Education and Health Promotion
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

To help strengthen the capacity of Afro-Caribbean Francophone communities to fight the stigma surrounding mental illness, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has developed a series of customized workshops. The goal is to promote a better understanding and acceptance of people living with a mental illness, while also addressing myths and prejudices or misconceptions. The workshops fit perfectly with the CAMH's mission, which is to improve the quality of life for people who are struggling with mental illness and health problems and to promote health. Through these workshops and specialized projects, the CAMH is able to transform lives.

The workshops, which are a part of the organization's cognitive-behavioural therapy adaptation project, were offered in several Ontario cities. In each location, health, mental health and social workers, religious and community leaders and members of the community reacted positively to the opportunity to discuss mental health, a subject that is still too often considered taboo. Members of the African and Caribbean Francophone communities particularly appreciated that the CAHM was able to adapt its public education and training approach to their specific needs, while taking their language and culture into account.

In fact, the CAMH workshops proved beneficial in two ways. Given the immigration issues at play and the complications resulting from the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the organization saw the need to take action to help people manage their heightened anxiety, their shock, and their feeling of powerlessness in the face of so much loss and devastation. The CAMH developed pilot workshops focused on art therapy. Using a varied artistic approach, and through a review of literature and small discussion groups in a safe and secure environment, participants were encouraged to develop intercultural and technical skills. As a result, they were able to improve their knowledge of their clients'

living situation (e.g. traditional know-how, community and spiritual values and holistic health care). The following testimonial by one participant reflects this:

"Clinicians and counsellors who work with the adults, children and families who have been in one way or another affected by the earthquake in Haiti can exhibit more stress in their work due to the aforementioned factors. It was necessary to help us so that we could in turn help others affected by the same tragedy... That, in my opinion, is the real benefit of this kind of training provided by the CAHM and can be effectively adapted to the context."

The CAMH team, together with local and government agencies, held a series of nine training and knowledge transfer sessions with over 400 members of the Haitian community. Participants—women, men, youth and students—who represented a variety of professions thoroughly enjoyed the sessions.

This project would not have been possible without the financial support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). For further information on the CAMH's mission to Haiti, please contact antoine_derose@camh.net.



Putting Young Newcomers on the Path to Success: Community Action Using a Holistic Approach

In every town or city, the community service centre is among the first to see how social and demographic changes are transforming neighbourhoods. In Ottawa, the Vanier Community Service Centre (CSC), which serves a predominantly Francophone population, has seen its client base widen considerably thanks to the continuous arrival of newcomers.

All too aware of the growing number of immigrant families in Ottawa's Vanier sector and their great need for support, the CSC developed a range of settlement services in addition to employability programs. Working closely with these families, the organization was able to observe that young immigrants aged 14 to 18 in particular have great difficulty integrating into Canadian society. According to the Immigrant Youth in Canada report released by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), young newcomers who attend high school often feel ostracized. While adolescence is a difficult life stage for most, it appears to be even more so for youth who, in addition to facing the challenges of immigration, must adapt to a whole new way of life. Many did not choose to leave their home country; they followed their family, leaving

behind all they had ever known. Immigrant youth feel deeply alienated in the host country, their reality and interests so vastly different from those of Canadian-born youth. From all indications, their early Canadian experience is marked by strong feelings of isolation and loneliness that can lead them down the wrong path.

Le CSC Vanier propose aux ados immigrants de 14 à 18 ans une série d'activités récréo-culturelles, en français, pour les intégrer plus rapidement à la culture canadienne.

This is what prompted the Vanier CSC to launch a new program in the spring of 2010 specifically designed to put immigrant youth on the path to success. It was made possible thanks to funding support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and is part of a long line of community initiatives by Vanier CSC

over the last 30 years to empower individuals through prevention, information, education and intervention, on a foundation of community collaboration.

The innovative 12-month program offers immigrant teens aged 14 to 18 an opportunity to take part in a variety of recreational and cultural activities, all engineered to integrate them more quickly into Canadian culture, effectively breaking them out of the social isolation mould. Through cultural outings, hiking, career exploration including work internships, leadership camps, chat sessions and get-togethers and hands-on awareness-raising workshops, teen immigrants learn how to cope with their new life and the stresses that come with it. For example, these teens are particularly sensitive to their families' financial hardships and finding a source of income often ranks among their top concerns. To help them deal with this in a positive way,

DID YOU KNOW...

The concept of the practice firm is celebrating 10 years of success. The Vanier Community Service Centre (CSC) uses it as a way of breaking the cycle of no experience, no job; no job, no experience that hinders many people, especially immigrants. And it works very well: 85% of participants find a job in their field. They get 12 solid weeks of work experience in a dynamic, professional setting within the Vanier CSC. With the collaboration of private-sector employers, participants work on completing real-world business projects or ventures. In so doing, they acquire new skills, while learning to use modern office equipment. They also receive support on how to develop an effective job search strategy. References based on their business performance are also provided. This successful program is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.



the Vanier CSC gathers them in a workshop to explore positive ways of achieving their money goal. They learn about the job market, how it works and how to boost their employability. Other workshops teach them how to write a strong resume and cover letter, how to develop an effective job search strategy, and how to prep for an interview. The program gives young immigrants the keys to success through positive thinking, positive action and self-empowerment.

"Working as a social catalyst for positive change in the community has shown us that when people have the right information and the right tools, they develop a sense of belonging, they begin to care about their community. Correspondingly, they become more engaged and develop a more positive view of themselves and the future,"

says Éric Cuillerier, Program Manager of Employment Services at the Vanier CSC.

As the gateway to the community, the Vanier CSC is well positioned to extend a helping hand to newcomers. Families looking for information, services and resources naturally turn to it for support. As part of its mission, the Vanier CSC also works closely with schools and school boards. Community and school stakeholders work hand in hand, forming a support network around youth and their families, the kind of partnership embodied by the CSC's immigrant youth initiative.

Implementation will be overseen by a volunteer advisory committee to ensure the initiative runs smoothly and achieves stated goals. Representation on the committee is as broad as the organization's client base. It includes immigrant teens of course, immigrant parents, program partners, and employers. At some point, more representatives will come on board to act as mentors. The committee is supported by a three-member work team led by a program manager; two more staff members will hopefully be hired after start-up. Team members have intimate knowledge of and experience in integration, and are thus well equipped to help teen immigrants overcome the obstacles they face in their host community.

Éric Cuillerier sees enormous potential in the project. Not only is the model easily transferable anywhere in the province, or on a national scale, it can also be implemented in an urban or a rural setting. In urban centres, for example, a project like the one developed by the Vanier CSC can reduce the problem of street gangs, but in rural areas, it can be used to break immigrant teens out of isolation. "Teens need to be recognized, accepted and valued, and must be given the opportunity to contribute to their community. The Vanier CSC initiative is a springboard. It gives teens the foundation, the structure and the tools they need to take control of their lives, to exercise leadership in a positive way, and to make the right choices based on real needs and healthy interests."

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Editorial team in interview with Éric Cuillerier,
Program Manager of Employment Services,
Vanier Community Services Centre

Cultural skills training: a necessity borne out of diversity!

Service providers everywhere are looking to adapt to Ontario's fast-changing socio-demographic reality, while newcomers look for ways to fit in. From Windsor to Hawkesbury, from Hearst to Toronto, French-speaking newcomers are grappling with the challenges of making a new life for themselves. Conversely, Francophone service providers are trying to understand the needs of immigrants, to accept and integrate them.

The French-language cultural skills training developed and provided by La Passerelle is exactly what both groups need, namely:

- ▶ solutions to help service providers wanting to expand and strengthen their client base to prepare for and adapt to an increasingly diverse marketplace.
- ▶ solutions to help newcomers wishing to successfully integrate into society to better understand the Canadian way of life and actively contribute to it.

The truly innovative feature of this training is its bidirectional focus. Both groups learn how to coexist and thrive together, which can only make Ontario stronger and better. How? Through mutual understanding and the acquisition of skills used to bring about positive change in society and among us.

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Compétences
Culturelles



Economy - Jobs - Recognition

Rifssso's New Provincial Initiative: Customized Support for French-Speaking Foreign-Trained Health and Social Services Professionals



Every year, great numbers of immigrants head for Ontario; many are professionals trained in the health and social services sectors. According to Canadian government figures, these professionals make up a significant proportion of Canadian health workers. Given the labour shortage already threatening various sectors, including health and social services, foreign-trained professionals have an important role to play in the Canadian society of today and tomorrow. Their social and economic integration is directly dependent upon their ability to successfully integrate the labour market. Herein lies the greatest challenge, because the credential recognition and accreditation process they must undergo in order to practise their profession on Canadian soil, whether in health care, social services or other field, is long and hard. The fact that few resources are available in French only makes it harder. The question is: how to help them?

The scope of this challenge prompted Rifssso, the provincial body representing French-speaking professionals working in the health and social services sectors, to launch an unprecedented initiative. Its goal is twofold: first, to support foreign-trained professionals so they can successfully integrate the labour market in their field of study; and second, to provide settlement and integration organizations serving French-speaking newcomers with the proper tools so they can better inform clients on the licensing process and direct them to the appropriate French-language resources.

"Professional integration involves a lot more than the recognition of foreign credentials. We must work together to give foreign-trained professionals

every opportunity to succeed on Canadian soil. That means actively supporting them with relevant information and training to help them navigate the accreditation process. It also means working with frontline service organizations so they can effectively guide newcomers toward reliable French-language resources and help them through the process," said Christiane Fontaine, Rifssso's Executive Director.

Implementation of the 18-month provincial initiative, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), is led by an advisory panel. Its mandate is to guide efforts at all stages of the project, from planning to execution, promotion through to evaluation. Panel members include representatives of settlement and integration agencies, various ethnocultural communities, foreign-trained health and social services professionals as well as project partners. Efforts are focused on implementing the following activities:

- ▶ A train-the-trainer style **provincial forum in the fall** for representatives of settlement and integration networks and agencies. The objective is to help them gain a better understanding of the accreditation process enforced by regulatory bodies in the health and social services sectors and to familiarize with French-language resources. This will help them to provide greater assistance to French-speaking newcomers and to refer them to the appropriate resources.

- Four **regional information sessions** in Northern, Central, Eastern and Southern Ontario. These sessions will bring together French-speaking foreign-trained professionals from the health and social services sectors to examine the accreditation process. Participants will also have the opportunity to review a draft guide currently being developed by Rifssso for their benefit. Follow-up will also be done with each participant to identify the barriers they encountered in the accreditation process.
- A **unique reference tool** offering a complete range of essential information collected from a variety of reliable sources. This new resource is intended to help Ontario's French-language settlement and integration agencies and networks provide newcomers with complete, accurate and current information on the steps toward achieving accreditation. In addition to outlining this process, the tool introduces them to regulated professions and occupations, key characteristics and requirements as well as the work terminology specific to each. The reference tool also directs users to the appropriate agency for credential and Canadian equivalency assessment, skills development and language training needs or other related issues.

This reference tool, which Rifssso expects to launch at a forum, will be available in print and online. The forum is intended for settlement and integration agencies and networks, in other words frontline workers who are normally the first to meet and greet newcomers and guide them through the Canadian system.

For more information about the new provincial initiative, call (416) 968-6759, or send an email to info@rifssso.ca. French-speaking professionals are welcome to visit www.rifssso.ca where they will find useful French-language resources.

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Editorial team in an interview with Rifssso Executive Director Christiane Fontaine, and Project Officer Marie-Paule Jean-Gilles

Immigrant Employees: A Window on the World

Melinda Wong,
Manager, Communications and Marketing
Hire Immigrants Ottawa

Now that the economy is gradually recovering, the shortage of qualified workers is once again a significant issue for many organizations. In light of the declining birth rate and number of post-secondary graduates, coupled with the unprecedented rise in retirements, the dearth of labour will very likely worsen. According to Statistics Canada, within the next two years immigration will become the only source of labour market growth. Ottawa and the surrounding area is ranked second in Ontario for immigration, but many of the foreign-educated workers who settle here remain under- or unemployed. According to the Conference Board of Canada, this costs the Canadian economy \$3.4 to \$5 billion per year.

Given that the market for talent is becoming increasingly competitive, diversity can be a competitive advantage for employers recruiting from the abundant but at times neglected pool of qualified immigrants. Hiring these people can, among other benefits, add a competitive advantage, open new market segments and give access to a more educated pool of workers.

Qualified immigrants can help employers set themselves apart from the competition, since a diverse workforce — made up of people with widely varied backgrounds and experiences — is more conducive to innovation, creativity and productivity. People with special knowledge of emerging markets may be a blessing for organizations seeking

to explore new horizons. Given that nearly a quarter of Ottawa's population is of non-Canadian origin, the local market itself is increasingly becoming more diverse. As the number of Canadian-born students graduating from one of our universities continues to decline, qualified immigrants, who often also have considerable professional experience will become the main source of university graduates. Ottawa currently attracts highly qualified foreigners with professional skills, specialized knowledge and experience: on average, nearly 75 per cent of immigrant workers settling in the city have a university degree and 35 per cent of them have a graduate degree.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) is a community-based organization that works with local employers to help them increase their capacity to effectively recruit qualified immigrants and integrate them into their workplace. Led by United Way Ottawa in partnership with the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce and the Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la Capitale nationale as well as the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, LASI World Skills and the City of Ottawa, the HIO initiative is funded by the Government of Ontario and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

HIO provides employers with free cross-cultural training as well as tools and resources to help them integrate qualified immigrants into their business.

For a list of cross-cultural presentations, resources and tools, visit www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca.



Internationally Educated Health Professionals: A Promising Workplace Integration Pilot Project

Immigration plays a significant role in the social, demographic, cultural and economic growth of Francophone minority communities. Over the past several years, this inescapable fact has led the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) and its member teaching institutions to focus in particular

on the situation of internationally educated French-speaking health professionals. La Cité collégiale, a CNFS member, is spearheading an Ontario pilot project designed to help health professionals to successfully integrate into the health care sector. This pilot project is funded through the Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) Program at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

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The Situation

A CNFS research report published in March 2009 provides a revealing look at how internationally educated French-speaking health professionals are faring in Francophone minority communities. From the outset, the report points to the lack of information about the credential recognition and workplace integration process.

The authors of the report go so far as to question whether internationally educated health professionals are even receiving accurate and complete information on what to expect once they reach Canada. Health professionals immigrating to Canada believe that finding work will be easy since they are educated, experienced, and were selected as skilled workers. But once on Canadian soil, they encounter a much harsher reality. For example, international graduates surveyed in Ontario report that the process of certification and legalization of original degrees, certificates and transcripts alone is extremely slow and costly. It can take up to two and a half years and cost tens of thousands of dollars, if not more. In the majority of cases, internationally educated professionals are required to upgrade their skills and competency by taking refresher courses and training to improve their language skills, to better understand the Canadian way of life, in addition to taking exams for licensing purposes. They must overcome many other obstacles before reaching their goal: they must master new systems, workings and methods; they must understand the culture and learn to adjust to a minority linguistic context; they must contend with the lack of French-language resources, being underemployed, and deal with the resulting financial difficulties, in addition to grappling with housing issues, isolation and, understandably, culture shock.

The Need for Action

The challenge, as the CNFS sees it, is to find ways of boosting the employability quotient of internationally educated French-speaking health professionals, first by facilitating the process leading to the recognition of their credentials and, second, by helping them to integrate into their host Francophone minority community. As the CNFS points out, the health care sector both provincially and nationally is facing a serious labour shortage, yet,

internationally educated health professionals living in Canada are largely underemployed.

“For a decade or more, we have been observing a shortage of health care workers in Canada, and more specifically a shortage of French-speaking health care professionals. Yet, every year, Ontario and Canada welcome a large number of international graduates specializing in health care. To address this issue, the CNFS commissioned the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities to conduct a study in order to document the situation in Francophone minority communities,”

said Maggy Razafimbahiny, Immigration Project Manager at the CNFS..

This important study, which found major challenges and roadblocks, calls for action. Based on its findings, the CNFS, in collaboration with La Cité collégiale and other partners, developed a model tailored to the Ontario situation and launched a project that focuses on two priority areas: information-gathering and referrals. The central idea is to help internationally educated French-speaking professionals to more easily navigate the credential recognition process and guide them, with the help of relevant information and refresher courses, to achieve successful workplace integration in health care. By March 2011, more than 50 immigrants are expected to take part in the pilot project under the guidance of two referral consultants.

Information-Gathering Component

Work under this project component focuses on properly documenting the difficulties that internationally educated professionals face in their new environment. In the process, it is hoped that other solutions will be found to help them overcome challenges and to become integration success stories both from a professional and social standpoint.

Referrals Component

Referrals is a comprehensive process that involves informing, guiding and accompanying; explaining and facilitating steps and procedures to be completed; mapping out possible pathways and leading clients to the relevant regulatory agencies and bodies; identifying and assessing various career options in health care; honing in on professional knowledge gaps and providing training options; guiding clients to employment and social services, while helping them to access all other necessary services and stakeholders as they undergo the challenging integration process.

“Newcomers, like all other individuals, are not one dimensional. In order to successfully integrate them professionally, it is necessary to focus just as much on their personal, family, social and cultural integration. In referral work, we believe it is more beneficial to adopt a holistic approach, because it allows us to take into account the basic needs of individuals and to look at all facets of their new life,” explained Frédéric Thibault-Chabot, a registered occupational therapist and currently CNFS Coordinator at La Cité collégiale.

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The two-pronged project was developed on the basis of partnership, collaboration and a fount of knowledge and know-how. Research institutes, health care facilities and teaching institutions, social services, settlement agencies, integration services organizations and other support groups in society are all working together to find ways to better integrate internationally educated health professionals. In fact, the project leaders believe that partnership, collaboration and access to a diversity of knowledge and know-how are essential building blocks in developing strong evidence-based intervention models.

Once completed and following a rigorous evaluation, the project is expected to provide valuable clues as to the most effective formula for successfully integrating international

trained health professionals in Francophone minority communities.

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Équipe éditoriale en entrevue avec Frédéric Thibault-Chabot, gestionnaire au Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) à La Cité collégiale, Maggy Razafimbahiny, gestionnaire de projets en immigration au CNFS, et Caroline Gagnon, coordonnatrice des communications au CNFS

Good to know



Intercultural training is now available online to everyone—trainers, supervisors, advisers, other health care professionals and stakeholders—encountering and working with internationally educated French-speaking health professionals. Simply go to www.cnfs.net.

Why intercultural training? Because it allows one to acquire the necessary abilities and knowledge for establishing and maintaining harmonious relations in an intercultural environment. Given the major social and demographic changes currently occurring in Ontario, having intercultural skills is an asset.

This is an initiative of the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) in partnership with La Cité collégiale in Ontario and the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface in Manitoba.

For information about the CNFS and its initiatives in the area of Francophone immigration, visit www.cnfs.net

SESRO for French-speaking Newcomers: Helping to Launch Careers in Agri-food and Rural Environment

Sonia Fournier
SESRO Project Coordinator, University of
Guelph – Campus d'Alfred



French-speaking newcomers bring with them a wealth of knowledge, know-how and experiences, not to mention great aspirations and dreams. Recognizing the value and tremendous potential of this human capital, government at the provincial and federal levels supports a variety of programs that help newcomers integrate into Canadian society for a stronger and more competitive Ontario and Canada. Bridge training programs are among the promising initiatives that receive government funding, because they are engineered to help newcomers overcome the many obstacles they face when looking for employment in their field of expertise. Non recognition of foreign credentials, lack of experience in the Canadian labour market and language skills are just a few of the hurdles foreign-trained professionals must surmount in order to practise their profession on Canadian soil.

University of Guelph – Campus d'Alfred spearheads one such program called Specialized Employment in Support of Rural Ontario or SESRO. Its goal is to improve the prospects of employment for foreign-trained professionals in the agri-food sector and rural environment. This program was made possible thanks to a three-year grant from the Ontario

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and a contribution from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

Career Springboard

By 2013, SESRO will have helped 65 foreign-trained professionals to find gainful employment in their field of study by effectively providing them with a springboard into one of the target sectors. To achieve this goal, efforts will focus on four key areas of intervention, namely assessment, retraining, work experience and employment services.

1. Assessment of academic credentials and professional skills acquired abroad, including the level of proficiency in English, will be conducted to help newcomers achieve Canadian equivalency. Linguistic assessment as it pertains to the field of agronomy will help determine the level of training each client requires.
2. Retraining, which combines the acquisition of linguistic skills required in the field of agronomy, and general training will be provided. General training is intended to raise awareness of specific requirements in each sector (i.e., agri-food and rural environment) in Canada, to familiarize clients with the Canadian workplace culture, and to help them become recognized as Professional Agrologists, or Agricultural Technicians in Ontario.
3. Work experience in the Canadian labour market will be acquired by clients through internships lasting at least eight weeks; mentoring opportunities will also be provided.
4. Employment services will be offered so clients can gain a foothold in the labour market. Services include assistance in developing an effective job search strategy and gaining a better understanding of rural Ontario, as well as support for rural employers to help them successfully integrate foreign-trained professionals in the workplace.

Target Sectors

The agriculture and agri-food sector encompasses a variety of fields, including provision of agricultural inputs and services, primary agriculture, food processing, beverages and tobacco (FBT), retail and wholesale sales and food services. Careers in this sector include Agro-Environmental Advisor, Plant Research Assistant, Food Quality Inspector, Veterinary Assistant and Landscaper.

The environmental sector focuses on the protection of air, water, soil and ecosystem quality. Specialty areas in the rural environment sub-sector targeted by the SESRO program include environmental protection techniques such as water treatment.

Did you know?

- ▶ Since 2003, thanks to bridge training programs, Ontario has helped nearly 40,000 newcomers in over 100 trades and professions to obtain a license and find employment in their field.
- ▶ There are 137,000 French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec.
- ▶ 70% of Francophone immigrants living outside Quebec, or 95,900, are found in Ontario.
- ▶ In 2008, the agriculture and agri-food sector provided one job in eight and represented 8.1% of the total GDP.
- ▶ Campus d'Alfred is the only post-secondary French-language institution dedicated to the agri-food sector in Ontario.

For more information, visit the University of Guelph – Campus d'Alfred web site at www.alfredc.uoguelph.ca, or contact Project Coordinator Sonia Fournier at sfournier@alfredc.uoguelph.ca, or at 613-679-2218, extension 502.